

National Park Service

Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area



SOLSTICE CANYON



olstice Canyon—a place where nature greets you with the sights and sounds of a babbling brook set amidst towering alder and sycamore trees. Green leaves surround you like a giant cocoon, even in hot, dry summers, filling you with a sense of peace and solitude.

The solitude, serenity, and abundant natural resources have attracted people to Solstice Canyon for centuries. The Chumash historically used the land for food, water and shelter. Ranchers grazed cattle in the area for many years. Around 1865, Matthew Keller built a stone cottage, which is still visible from Solstice Canyon Trail. The cottage is believed to be the oldest existing stone building in Malibu.

Another home was built on the property in 1952. Renowned African-American architect Paul Williams designed the house for property owners Fred and Florence Roberts. The house was later featured in an issue of *Architectural Digest* for its stunning blend of natural features within the design, including waterfalls, creeks and trees. Today, you can see a small part of the past in the horseshoes and colorful pieces of glass glittering in the walkways at Tropical Terrace, near the building’s foundations.

Other evidence of human interaction with the land includes two tall, tan buildings on the hillside, which stand as landmarks to another era. Space Technology Laboratories, Inc., a subsidiary of *Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge* (TRW), rented 10 acres from the Roberts family from 1961-1973. TRW tested satellite equipment for space missions, including the *Pioneer* series, and conducted medical research in magnetic resonance imaging. Solstice Canyon was chosen to conduct such tests, due to its convenient location, and its lack of human-made and natural disturbances.

Today, Solstice Canyon still serves as a haven from city life. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy first opened Solstice Canyon as a public park in 1988. It is now managed by the National Park Service.

Visit Solstice Canyon, where the old meets the new. Help us preserve and protect its serenity and beauty for all to enjoy.



National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks CA 91360
www.nps.gov/samo

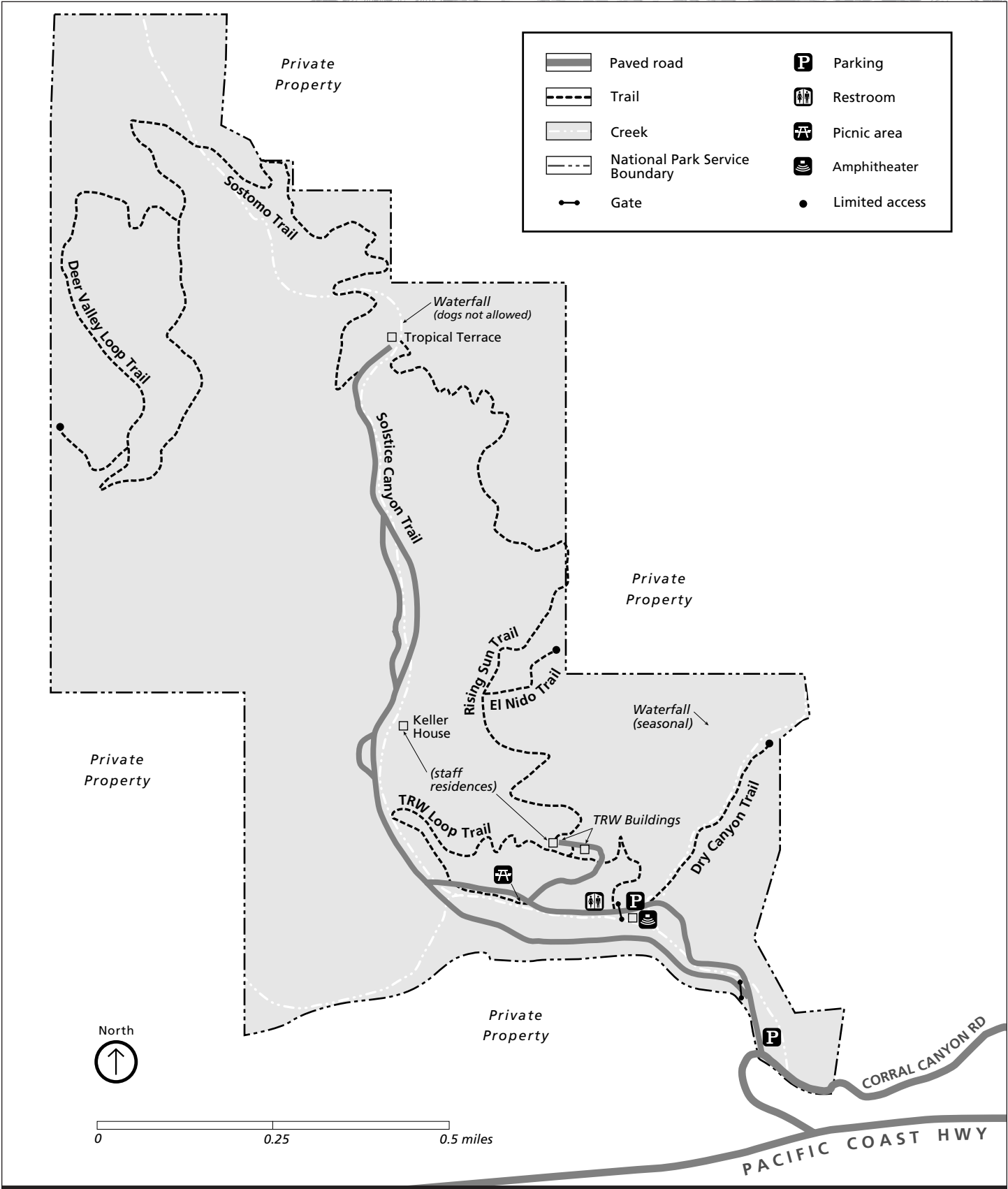
Visitor Center 805-370-2301
In emergency: dial 911
To report suspicious activity call
Angeles Dispatch 661-723-3620

Information & Safety

- Natural and cultural features** are protected and may not be collected or disturbed.
- Be prepared:** take water, food, and first-aid supplies when hiking, biking or horseback riding.
- Dogs** must be on a leash at all times; leash cannot be longer than 6'. For the health and consideration of others, clean up after your pet.
- Firearms, weapons and traps** are not allowed on public lands in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.
- Hikers** must yield to **horseback riders**. **Bicyclists** must ride courteously and yield to hikers and horseback riders.

- Fire** is a constant danger. Open fires are prohibited. Please do not smoke.
- Stay on established trails** and off of private property.
- Trail closures** will be in effect during and following extreme weather or hazardous conditions.
- Learn to recognize and be alert for **ticks, bees, rattlesnakes, and poison oak**.
- Water** from streams and ponds is not safe to drink, due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan. Swimming is not permitted.

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Trails

Dry Canyon Trail 1.2 miles round trip, easy—Don't let the name fool you—this canyon isn't always dry. Walk through woodlands next to an intermittent stream. Look for signs of wildlife, including deer, quail and bobcat. At the end of the trail, winter rains bring a 150-foot waterfall to life.

TRW Loop Trail 1.5 miles round trip, easy—Begin at the trailhead across from the bulletin board. Continue past the TRW Buildings, through chaparral and an oak woodland. Cross Solstice Canyon Trail by the bridge to connect with the southern portion of the loop. From the picnic area, the trail follows the road back to the parking lot.

Solstice Canyon Trail 2.1 miles round trip, easy—Stroll down Solstice Canyon Trail and look for the Keller House, believed to be the oldest

existing stone building in Malibu. On your way to Tropical Terrace, see if you can spy the low concrete retaining walls of a former fish pond in a grassy area overlooking the creek. Many other clues to the past remain even though the Roberts' Family home, once located at Tropical Terrace, burned in 1982. Look for house foundations and a concrete bomb shelter. Walk across the creek into a hidden sanctuary and garden. It's hard to imagine now, but at one time giraffes, camels, buffalo, African deer and exotic birds roamed the canyon on the Roberts' Ranch.

Rising Sun Trail 1.5 miles, moderate—This trail is believed to be named after the Rising Sun Vineyard, a winery established in the Los Angeles area by Matthew Keller. Consider hiking the trail as a loop in conjunction with Solstice Canyon

Trail for a variety of scenery from canyon floor to ridgeline. Look for a postcard-perfect view of the ocean, framed by the canyon walls at the TRW Buildings.

Sostomo Trail/Deer Valley Loop 3.9 miles, moderate to strenuous—Locate the trailhead off of Solstice Canyon Trail, southwest of Tropical Terrace. Hike through chaparral and coastal sage scrub to the west ridge of Solstice Canyon, to see some of the best ocean views in the Santa Monica Mountains. Look for "Deer Valley," an area near an oak woodland and meadow known for its abundance of wildlife.

Note: Bicyclists are limited to the paved areas only. Carpooling is encouraged since parking is limited.